

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A one-piece dental implant extending between a first end and a second end, said one-piece dental implant comprising the following distinct regions integrated into one piece:
  - a) a threaded shaft tapering to a point at said first end;
  - b) a head at said second end, said head having a shape which is capable of accepting and releasably retaining a keeper cap or an O-ring, or which is capable of accepting and retaining a dental wire, or which is capable of accepting and releasably retaining an O-ball, said shape comprising convex and/or concave elements and being other than ball-shaped; and
  - c) optionally a non-circular abutment positioned between said threaded shaft and said head.
2. The dental implant according to claim 1, which has a head having a shape which is capable of accepting and releasably retaining a keeper cap or an O-ring.
3. The dental implant according to claim 1, which has a head having a shape which is capable of accepting and retaining a dental wire.

4. The dental implant according to claim 1, which has a head having a shape which is capable of accepting and releasably retaining an O-ball.
5. The dental implant according to claim 1, which has a non-circular abutment positioned between the threaded shaft and the head.
6. The dental implant according to claim 1, which has an outwardly tapering smooth collar positioned between said threaded shaft and said head.
7. The dental implant according to claim 1, which has a head that has an irregular surface.
8. A method of inserting a dental implant into the jaw-bone of a patient, said method comprising:
  - a) providing a dental implant according to claim 1;
  - b) inserting said dental implant through gum tissue overlying the jaw-bone of the patient into the jaw-bone of the patient.
9. The method according to claim 8, wherein said inserting involves gripping a non-circular abutment of said dental implant with a tool or with one's fingers and advancing the dental implant through the gum tissue into the jaw-bone of the patient.

10. The method according to claim 8, wherein said inserting involves gripping the head of said dental implant with a tool or with one's fingers and advancing the dental implant through the gum tissue into the jaw-bone of the patient.

11. A method of securing a removable prosthesis to the jaw-bone of a patient, said method comprising:

- a) providing a dental implant according to claim 1;
- b) inserting said dental implant into the jaw-bone of a patient;
- c) providing a removable prosthesis; and
- d) removably securing the removable prosthesis to said dental implant.

12. The method according to claim 11, wherein the removable prosthesis is formed around a keeper cap containing an O-ring-shaped insert or a plastic insert, and said removable prosthesis is removably secured by attaching the keeper cap via said O-ring-shaped insert or said plastic insert to said dental implant.

13. A method of securing a fixed prosthesis to the jaw-bone of a patient, said method comprising:

- a) providing a dental implant according to claim 1;

- b) inserting said dental implant into the jaw-bone of a patient; and
- c) securing the fixed prosthesis to the jaw-bone of the patient by fixing the prosthesis to the dental implant.

14. A method of securing an orthodontic appliance to the jaw-bone of a patient, said method comprising:

- a) providing a dental implant according to claim 1;
- b) inserting said dental implant into the jaw-bone of a patient; and
- c) securing a dental wire, orthodontic elastomers or other orthodontic appliances to the dental implant.

15. A combination comprising:

- a) a dental implant according to claim 1; and
- b) a retrofit head adapted to fit over the head of said dental implant and to be secured to said dental implant, said retrofit head itself having a head having a shape which is capable of accepting and releasably retaining a keeper cap or an O-ring, or which is capable of accepting and retaining

a dental wire, or which is capable of accepting and releasably retaining an O-ball.

16. A method of inserting a combination dental implant and retrofit head into the jaw-bone of a patient, said method comprising:

- a) providing a combination according to claim 15;
- b) inserting the combination or the dental implant only through gum tissue overlying the jaw-bone of the patient into the jaw-bone of the patient; and
- c) fitting the retrofit head onto the dental implant in the event that said inserting was of the dental implant only.